

# Info@starklawlibrary.org

Stark County Law Library Association

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## BEGINNERS

## This is a Mouse

**The email address, info@starklawlibrary.org really works! TRY IT!!**

We are going to start our column with **“the most basic of basics.”** I have found that when working with adults, the most daunting obstacle to using a computer is the mouse. You must practice, much like a first grader learns to use a pencil to write, the mouse must become an extension of your hand and become as comfortable and familiar as a pencil. Sounds easy, but I’ve seen many adults meet the mouse for the first time and it’s not always a pretty sight!!



Here are a few suggestions:

1. Have someone (preferably a youngster - they’re better at this stuff than most of us) open solitaire or any other card game for you. Usually all you have to do is point at the card you want to move and click a mouse button. If you are using a PC, click on the “Start” button in the lower left corner of your screen, move the mouse up to the word “Programs” and click on that word. Now move the mouse over and up to “Accessories,” then over to games. There should be a solitaire game there or maybe even the “Hearts” card game!

2. After you have mastered pointing and clicking – try dragging. Jigsaw puzzles are great for this! Have someone help you onto the Internet and go to <<http://www.JigZone.com>> which has a wide range of subject matter and levels of difficulties; I highly recommend it.



Once you’ve conquered the mouse, move on to the keyboard. Unless you have voice recognition software, the old “hunt & peck” that got you through school isn’t good enough! And even if you are a good typist, faster and more accurate is always better. I recommend *Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing*, but any typing program will do. Check the bargain bins at Best Buys, Office Max or Staples for a good deal, you don’t need the latest version of the programs.



Please don’t think you have to do this alone – *human beings* are your best resource!

ASK for help when you need it!

### Special points of interest:

- Learn how to use your mouse
- Practice your typing skills whether you are one who uses the “hunt & peck” technique or an experienced typist, **you can never be fast or accurate enough!!**

## INTERMEDIATE

## Search Engine Comparison

**A search engine  
is a search  
engine, is a  
search engine.**

**NOT SO!!**

**The most  
important finding  
of the study is that  
*search engines are  
not yet viable  
alternatives to  
commercial legal  
resources for  
topical research.***

A recent article in Law Library Journal compared 15 search engines, both general and legal, with surprising results. (Barmakaim, Deanna. 92 Law Library Journal 339)

Legal researchers who need to locate a known item on the Web will find it more quickly using one of the following general search engines (in order of performance).

- Yahoo! <<http://www.yahoo.com>>
- HotBot <<http://hotbot.lycos.com/?query=>>
- GoTo.com which is now Overture <<http://www.overture.com/>>
- Google <<http://www.google.com/>>
- LookSmart <<http://www.looksmart.com/>>

These engines rated much higher than legal engines in this category! The study used 50 known legal items in its searches and seven engines put the known item in the top ten results more than 50% of the time. By the way, LawCrawler and LawRunner rated last!

But in the “Relevancy Study” which ranked engines according to the information retrieved, the legal search engines such as LawRunner and LawCrawler did much better than all the general engines (except Google), but had a significant amount of overlap, so just use one.

Of the non-legal engines, Google (which scored #1 in relevancy) and Fast delivered “unique” results with little overlap.

If at Google you do not succeed – try Fast. Then try one of the legal engines.

The most important finding of the study is that the relevance of search engine results, even from Google and the legal search engines, is low, indicating that *search engines are not yet viable alternatives to commercial legal resources for topical research.*

**Come in and use our resources!!  
We'll help you get started!!**

Before we get to the "Advanced Section" I want to throw in a site all lawyers should have in their “Favorites”! This site has millions (well, lots) of legal search engines!!! It's called “Meta Links” and its URL is <<http://www.llrx.com/sources.html>>.

If you are not sick of the words “search engine” go to “Search Engine Show Down” at <<http://www.searchengineshowdown.com/>> or Internet.com's Search Engine Watch at: <<http://searchenginewatch.com/>> for even **more** interesting information!

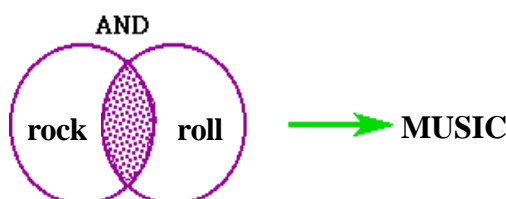
And just for fun you might want to check out “If Search Engines Were People” at <<http://websearch.about.com/internet/websearch/library/weekly/aa052199.htm>>.

## ADVANCED

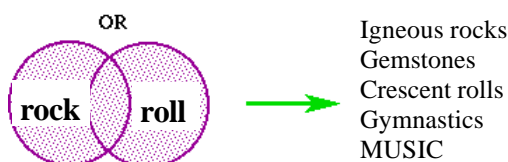
## Boolean Searching

General search engines are fine when used for locating most information, but for advanced computer users, the best and quickest way to get at the information you need is to use advanced searching techniques. Usually, each engine has its own set of rules, but most are based on standard Boolean Logic.

Sounds tough, but with the help of a few Venn diagrams you'll be searching like a pro in no time!

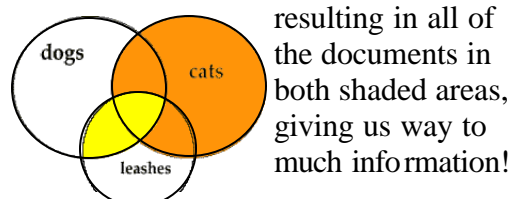


Boolean logic utilizes three primary operators: **AND**, **OR**, and **NOT**. Always use capital letters for search terms! Using the word "AND" actually **narrows** the results obtained in a search, while using the word "OR" **broadens** the results.

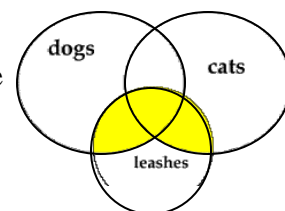


One more item that should be mentioned in doing a Boolean Search is "NESTING" or the use of parenthesis ( ) though it is not available with all search engines. If you are going to use more than two concepts, or use "AND" and "OR" in the same search, you have to tell the computer what to do first. What's in the parenthesis gets done first.

I found a great example of this concept in an article at the University of Albany Library. Using the Venn diagram again, if you were looking for information about using leashes with dogs or using leashes with cats and used the search: "cats OR dogs AND leashes", the computer would first "AND" the circles for **dogs** and **leashes** (the lighter area) then "OR" the resulting area with the circle for **cats**



Using parenthesis in the search string "(dogs OR cats) AND leashes" results in just the information we want!



"NOT" is a **dangerous** operator and should be used sparingly because it often eliminates documents you want!!

"NEAR" is an interesting operator in that what is "near" in one search engine is not "near" in another. Some very popular search engines (Google among others) don't even allow its use. In general, "NEAR" allows you to designate how close your search terms must be to one another in the results text.

Special points of interest:

When using Boolean Logic operators:

- "AND" narrows the results
- "OR" broadens the results
- "NOT" is a dangerous operator and should be used with great care!
- Always use capital letters to type the operators

Before you jump right in using Boolean for everything – get to know your favorite engine and learn its ins and outs by reading the help page for examples, tips, or interactive wizards that build search expressions for you.

Here are some good web sites I found that contain more information on advanced searching:

- “Boolean Logic” at <<http://www.teleport.com/~janetm/oii/boolean.html>> (Editorial Note – This is a Fun Tutorial)
- “Boolean Searching on the Internet: A Primer in Boolean Logic” at <<http://library.albany.edu/internet/boolean.html>>
- “The Search Strategy Planner” created by the Creighton University Library is a template that will be of great help organizing your Boolean search! It is located at: <<http://reinert.creighton.edu/101/srchplan.htm>>.
- “Using Boolean Logic With Internet Search Engines” at <<http://www.bccls.org/buckles/boolean.html>>

- “Web Search Cheat Sheet” at <<http://www.colosys.net/search/>>

\* Information for this section was gathered from “Boolean Tutorial” at <[http://florin.syr.edu/webarch/searchpro/boolean\\_tutorial.html](http://florin.syr.edu/webarch/searchpro/boolean_tutorial.html)>.

**Whatever you are searching for and at whatever level,  
the Law Library is a great place to start  
using the Internet.**

Let us know what you want reviewed here or what you'd like to read about pertaining to computers and legal research.

Call (330) 451-7380 for an appointment or stop in the Law Library anytime between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm.

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